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How Japanese Managers Champion Innovation**

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## ***Ware Ware Nihonjin* But We're Not All Alike: How Japanese Managers Champion Innovation**

**Abstract.** This paper, using a study based on a survey of 678 managers in 8 Japanese firms, examines the similarities and differences in the preferred styles of innovation championing that exist across large established Japanese companies. The results of the study show that championing styles vary greatly across Japanese organizations. The implication of this finding is that research on Japanese firms should avoid looking only for similarities which reinforce stereotypes of a "Japanese way" of managing the innovation process.

## Introduction

The rapid pace of technological and organizational change has made it increasingly difficult for firms to develop and sustain competitive advantage. Research (e.g. Burgelman, 1983; Venkataraman et al, 1992) has shown that innovation and the development of technology-based advantages are critical to organizational success and, indeed, survival in most industries today.

Previous research has also shown that innovation and the development of technology-based competitive advantages are key characteristics of successful Japanese companies (e.g., Kono,1984). The highest performing Japanese companies in the U.S., UK, Malaysia and Singapore have tended to be the most innovative (Sakuma, 1983).

Despite the importance of innovation to the competitive advantages of Japanese firms, we know relatively little about how different Japanese firms manage the innovation process. Little research has explored the innovation, new technology and new product development process in Japanese firms. While Nonaka (1991) has documented the innovation process in a few Japanese companies, he has not explored many important aspects of this activity, and only few other scholars have examined this topic at all (Tatsuno, 1990; Makino, 1987; Uenohara, 1991; Herbert, 1990). This absence of research has occurred despite widespread support for the idea that champions are the key to the innovation process in American firms (Burgelman, 1983; Schon, 1963; Van de Ven, 1986; Venkataraman et al, 1992).

Particularly glaring is the lack of knowledge of a key role in the innovation process - that of the innovation champion. Champions are individuals who overcome resistance to innovation in established organizations by taking actions that reduce the risk of innovative activity to other organization members (Burgelman, 1983). Champions are therefore crucial in

the development of innovation-based competitive advantages. However, organizations are resistant to innovation since it threatens the existing authority structure of organizations and disrupts organizational norms and routines. Given this resistance, absent champions, organizations would not be able to recombine resources in ways that create innovative new products or services that provide for a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Ghoshal, 1987).

The importance of championing behavior in Japanese firms in the process of developing innovative products and technologies suggests that we should learn more about the championing process in Japanese companies. Thus a key purpose of this paper is to explore how managers in different Japanese organizations approach this crucial process.

A second important objective of this paper is to clarify whether management systems of Japanese corporations differ significantly from each other. By exploring whether managers in a number of Japanese firms approach the championing process differently, this paper will contribute to the important but understudied area of Japanese corporate culture and innovation.

## MANAGERIAL BEHAVIOR AND CORPORATE CULTURE IN JAPANESE FIRMS

Much has been written about Japanese-style management over the past two decades. This was due, in no small part, to the rapid rise of Japanese firms in an increasingly competitive international economic arena and there have been literally thousands of articles in the academic and popular press describing, extolling, and criticizing 'the Japanese.' The result of this outpouring of research and observation is a broad consensus in the literature that there are

certain important characteristics of Japanese firms that are different, and some would add superior, to their Western counterparts.

Although most writers in the academic and popular press write about "the Japanese company," assuming that there is a high level of homogeneity among Japanese firms, there is little evidence to support this conclusion. While authors writing about Western firms warn against over-generalizations and carefully point out differences based on organizational attributes such as age, corporate culture, and management philosophy, most authors writing about Japanese firms continue to emphasize differences with Western organizations and similarities among Japanese firms. Even Lincoln's (1989) landmark study of satisfaction, commitment, and work organization in Japanese and U.S. firms focuses on the similarity among Japanese firms rather than the differences between them.

This focus on examining what is similar among "Japanese" firms reflects a fundamental fact concerning the field of Japanese management studies: We know relatively little about important differences among Japanese firms. This extends to our knowledge about innovation in Japanese firms for although industry differences, management philosophy and organizational structure create variation in all aspects of the innovation process in Japanese firms, with few exceptions (e.g. Herbert, 1990) American writings on the innovation process in Japan tend to argue that all Japanese firms approach this process in the same way (Uenohara, 1991; Tatsuno, 1990).

While the general subject of innovation in Japanese firms deserves closer study, in this paper we focus on only one part of the innovation process - the process of championing. We will explore whether, despite the prevailing academic view that high levels of social

homogeneity leads to little variance in managerial behavior across Japanese organizations, the preferences of Japanese managers for approaches to championing innovation varies significantly across Japanese organizations. If so, then an understanding of the innovation championing process, and hence of the innovation process in general in Japanese firms, requires an understanding of the specific culture and characteristics of each Japanese organization. We begin by looking at the degree of variability in corporate cultures in Japanese firms.

#### CORPORATE CULTURE VARIABILITY

Corporate culture is defined as "...basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define, in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion, an organization's view of itself and its environment (Schein, 1985: 6). Based on research carried out mostly in the U.S., theories of corporate culture have assumed that these cultures vary greatly from organization to organization since firms are formed through the unique experiences and environment of each organization (Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991).

Turning to the international context, extending this line of argument, we would expect that Japanese corporate cultures should vary a great deal since Japanese firms also face unique experiences and environments. However, while the differences in corporate culture among U.S. firms has received considerable attention during the last decade (e.g. Kilman, 1984; Schein, 1985; Deal and Kennedy, 1982) there has been little systematic work examining the differences in corporate culture between Japanese firms.

A very extensive review by the authors of the articles and books dealing with the role of Japanese corporate culture in the operations of Japanese firms found that very few present empirical evidence, either qualitative or quantitative, to support the authors' conclusions. The limited empirical evidence presented does suggest, however, that contrary to prevailing stereotypes, Japanese firms do have very different corporate cultures. For example, in a study of 88 firms, Kono (1990) found that differences in corporate culture among Japanese firms do exist. He found that there were five types of corporate culture, with the majority of the firms falling into what he called the "vitalized corporate culture" category (34) or the "bureaucratic corporate culture" (32).

While differing in research focus, in a study of 349 Japanese publicly held companies, Shibata, Tse, Vertinsky and Wehrung (1991) also found differences in corporate culture among Japanese firms. The study found that the normative systems governing the management of five senior executives of the Japanese firms sampled fell into three categories: the rational, the organizational process, and the organizational-learning paradigms. The authors concluded that no coherent Japanese management theory exists, but rather that the choice of the management system is tied to the firm's history and environment.

Considerable qualitative evidence also exists for strong differences in corporate culture among Japanese firms (Pascale and Athos, 1981; Johnson, 1988). While these authors mention firm differences in Japanese corporate culture, most researchers do not have this as their primary focus but discuss corporate culture within the context of other issues such as changes in Japanese firms trying to become more innovative (Nonaka, 1991), how corporate culture is promulgated in Japanese firms (Picken, 1987; Rohlen, 1974; Dore, 1973; Morita,

1986), how national differences lead to differences in corporate culture (Silk, 1989), and the influence of corporate culture on the cross-national strategic alliance of a Japanese firm with an American firm ( Business Week, 1987).

Despite the evidence that there are significant cultural variations among Japanese firms, some writers have continued to argue that there may in fact be little variability in Japanese corporate cultures. For example, in a study of 1075 line managers in five Japanese organizations, Wakabayashi, Graen, and Uhl-Bien (1990) proposed that the corporate culture of Japanese firms and the career path that it creates is generalizable across companies since they found no differences across the firms in their study. Other scholars have argued that the variation in Japanese corporate cultures is low because of the strength of the Japanese social environment. As Lincoln, Hanada and McBride (1986) explain:

....a case can be made that the adaptations of Japanese companies to technological and market environments at home and abroad have been heavily conditioned by an unusually strong set of institutional forces. Such pressures are arguably weaker or at least less uniform in the U.S., where extreme cultural heterogeneity, political decentralization, and geographic dispersion fragment the institutional environment to which U.S. organizations are constrained to adapt....Although we do not favor that point of view a priori, if cultural/institutional forces shape the structuring of Japanese organizations to a degree not common in the U.S., it could mean a correspondingly smaller role for technology and other task-related contingency variables (p.340).

Two conclusions can be drawn from the existing literature on Japanese corporate culture. First, the few empirical studies on Japanese corporate culture that have been conducted indicate that there is substantial variation in corporate culture and management practices across Japanese firms, but this finding has not been widely accepted by academics or managers. Second, there have been no empirical studies of the effect of differences in corporate culture

on innovation-related organizational behavior in Japanese firms. Because of the paucity and unconvincing nature of research in this area, we can not be sure if the American-derived model of organizational culture, with its emphasis on variation across organizations, is useful in understanding the innovation process in Japanese firms or if one can indeed generalize across Japanese organizations.

The answer to this question is important for two reasons. First, the question has implications for scholars of Japanese management and of institutional theory. Second, if the American model is correct, an understanding of the championing process in a particular Japanese organization will require in-depth study of that organization. If the alternative model is correct, an understanding of the championing process in a particular Japanese organization can be garnered from studies of championing on Japanese firms in general. In this paper we seek to answer this question. To do so, we must first understand the nature of innovation championing.

## INNOVATION CHAMPIONING BEHAVIOR

Innovation is important to the development of new competitive advantages since it allows for resources to be recombined in ways that differentiate the products and processes of one organization from those of another (Ghoshal, 1987). However, organizations are resistant to innovation since it threatens the existing power structure of the organization (Schon, 1963; Hannan and Freeman, 1977; Aldrich and Auster, 1986; Van de Ven, 1986) and disrupts organizational norms and routines that help the organization to overcome bounded rationality (March and Simon, 1958) and agency costs (Fama and Jensen, 1983; Jensen and Meckling,

1976). Innovation requires decisions under uncertainty about expectations concerning markets and technologies that do not yet exist (Venkataraman et al, 1992). As such, it often demands that decisions about the use of resources such as labor and capital and the design of organizational approaches and technologies to the exploitation of these resources be made in ways different from those for which organizational plans, routines and rules were designed (Quinn, 1985; Kanter, 1988).

Despite the demand for new approaches imposed by innovation, individuals in organizations have strong incentives to adhere to existing routines. While the development of new approaches may enhance the creation of new competitive advantages by the firm, it also increases the employment risk faced by the individual organization member. Deviating from prescribed organizational behavior increases the probability of a loss of one's employment if the deviations do not result in recognized benefit to the organization (Venkataraman et al., 1992). Since individuals cannot diversify this risk by taking on more than one job at a time, they are resistant to violating prescribed organizational behavior.

The resistance of organizational members to violating prescribed organizational behavior leads to a demand for innovation champions. Champions are individuals who overcome resistance to innovation in established organizations by taking actions that reduce the risk of innovative activity to other organization members (Burgelman, 1983). To reduce this resistance, champions adopt six roles in the innovation process (Shane, 1994). First, they steer the innovation through the organization's hierarchy to prevent the organizational hierarchy from blocking the innovation. Second, they ensure that the innovation effort is not hampered by organizational rules, norms and standard operating procedures. Third, champions

establish a mechanism for making decisions on the innovation. Fourth, champions persuade other organization members to support the innovation effort. Fifth, they supervise the innovation process. Sixth, they establish cross-functional support in the organization for the innovation.

Innovation champions can use a spectrum of behaviors to fulfill these roles. To keep the organizational hierarchy from blocking the innovation, the champion can create a ground swell of support for the innovation among the firm's employees or s/he can garner senior management approval before the innovation effort begins. To ensure that the innovation effort is not hampered by organizational rules, norms and procedures, the champion can break them by doing such things as bootlegging resources or violating organizational procedures, or the champion can bend the innovation effort to conform to these norms and procedures.

As a decision making mechanism for the innovation, the champion can limit decision making to high ranking members of the organization or s/he can include all organization members in the decision making process. To persuade other organization members to support the innovation, the champion can use formalized mechanisms like budgets and projections or informal mechanisms like appeals to the organization's strategic vision. In supervising the innovation effort, the champion can closely monitor the participants or he or she can give them a free license to innovate. Finally, in seeking cross-functional support, the champion can appeal directly to other units to get their support or he or she can wait for them to volunteer their support.

Is there a 'Japanese' approach to these six championing roles or do the preferred approaches vary by company? In order to answer this question, the following null hypothesis will be tested:

H1: There is no difference across Japanese companies in preference for championing behaviors.

It is our assumption that if differences do exist in championing behavior that this is a reflection of differences in corporate culture. One study on championing in American companies has indicated that corporate culture influences the championing roles that individuals adopt. Howell and Higgins (1991) showed that three different types of innovation championing were present in different organizational cultures: the rational approach, the renegade approach, and the participative approach. In bureaucratic cultures, renegade championing, in which individuals broke rules and operating procedures to promote the innovation, was more common. Participative championing, which stressed a bottom-up process, was more common in organic cultures. Rational championing was more common in conservative organizational cultures, which stressed the need for in depth study and financial evaluation of all major decisions. Therefore, differences in corporate culture might account for within country differences in approaches to championing among Japanese firms.

## METHOD

Organizations which were members of a corporate venturing study group sponsored by a prominent Japanese consultant were invited to participate in the study. All the organizations

were headquartered in Japan, most in the Tokyo region. Of the ten organizations contacted to participate in the study, eight agreed. This study, therefore, describes the results of a survey about innovation championing that was sent to 1500 managers in a non-random study of 8 large Japanese organizations in the first quarter of 1992. These organizations include the following companies: Uniden, Canon, Mitsui Petrochemicals, Hanshin Railroad, Kanto Auto, Mitsui Toatsu, and Kawasaki Steel.

We selected these companies to ensure that a range of industries, company ages and sizes would be represented in the sample. Because this study was exploratory in nature, we wanted to ensure variation in corporate culture. The industries represented range from electronics, where Japan is a world leader, to steel, an industry in decline in Japan. In addition, while Hanshin Railroad is in a purely domestic industry without foreign competitors, other companies in the sample such as Uniden, Canon, and Mitsui Petrochemicals compete in highly competitive global industries. Some companies were relatively young, small, entrepreneurial firms like Uniden, while others were older, more established companies like Kao.

A questionnaire survey was developed for this study. General background questions were used to ascertain information about age, work experience, education, managerial rank, organization, gender, championing experience and expatriate experience. The survey also asked twenty-four questions about the managers' preferences for how innovation championing should occur in their organizations. The items were measured on a five point Likert scale. The championing questions were selected from the existing innovation championing literature, drawing heavily on the work of Burgelman (1983); Howell and Higgins (1991), Imai et al, (1985), Kanter (1988), Knight (1987), Pinchot (1987), Schon (1963), Souder (1981) and Van

de Ven (1986). Readers are referred to Shane (1994) for the list of the questions that compose the survey.

The survey was translated into Japanese and back-translated into English to ensure accuracy by bilingual Japanese and American graduate students. Translation was done into the language of the native speaker and an iterative process was used to ensure that the questions in the Japanese translation and the English language original had the same meaning.

In early 1992, a copy of the survey was sent to each participating company's headquarters. The organizations copied the questionnaires and randomly distributed them to organization members along with a letter from senior management asking them to participate. The survey was completed by a total of 678 managers, providing a response rate of 45.2%.

The average respondent had 9.5 years of work experience, and 16 years of education. Eighty percent were male and 32 percent had championing experience. All of the respondents were of managerial rank and had individuals reporting to them.

We used the background information about the age, gender, education and functional area to examine whether the "average managers" in the eight companies were significantly different from one another on demographic characteristics. T-tests indicated that the company samples were not significantly different in terms of average age, level of education, tenure with the organization, years of work experience. Chi-square tests indicated that the company samples were not significantly different in terms of gender or functional area. These tests showed that the demographic characteristics of the "average managers" in the eight companies were not significantly different across the sample.

The questions on championing were factor analyzed to create a smaller number of championing dimensions, measured in the form of scales. These questionnaire items, and the scales that they form have been used in previous work on championing in multinational corporations (Shane, 1994; Shane 1995). Responses to these twenty-four questions were factor analyzed to reduce them to the six dimensions of championing behavior identified below. The six factors generated all had eigen values greater than one, acceptable reliabilities, item loadings of 0.50 or greater, and cross-loadings of less than 0.40. The preference of managers from each of the organizations for each of these roles were shown by factor scores on the six championing dimensions: (1) preference of violating organization hierarchy in the innovation championing process (Hierarchy); (2) preference for violating organizational norms, rules and procedures in the innovation championing process (Rules); (3) preference for treating all organization members as equals in the decision making process (Equality); (4) preference for using formalized mechanisms to persuade others to support the innovation effort (Formalize); (5) preference for close monitoring of innovators (Monitoring); (6) and preference for seeking cross-functional support for the innovation (Cross-functional). In all cases, the higher the factor score, the greater the preference for the behavior.

## RESULTS

The factor analysis generated standardized factor scores for each of the six championing dimensions. These factor scores ranged from a minimum of negative one to a maximum of

one. Positive scores indicate a preference for that championing dimension. Negative scores indicate a disfavor for the championing dimensions. Company mean scores and standard deviations for the six championing dimensions are shown in Table 1. This table shows the average factor scores for each of the eight organizations across the six championing dimensions and the standard deviations among the organization members on those factor scores. The table also shows the reliabilities for each of the six championing dimensions. The table indicates that the average scores for the championing dimensions are widely dispersed across the eight companies and that dispersion exists across all six championing dimensions.

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(INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE)

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The factor scores for the six championing dimensions were used to examine the relative similarity of the approaches to championing in the eight Japanese organizations included in the study. Hypothesis 1 proposed that all Japanese organizations have the same approach to innovation championing, and consequently that there would be no significant differences between Japanese organizations across the six championing dimensions.

In order to test this hypothesis, it is important to note that for the eight organizations in the sample, there are 28 possible two-company comparisons. Across six dimensions, the total number of two-company comparisons totals 168. In order to show that the Japanese companies do not share the same approach to innovation championing at the  $p < .05$  level, nine or more of the 168 paired comparisons would have to be significantly different at the  $p < .05$

level. Moreover, to show that the Japanese companies do not share the same approach to any one of the six innovation championing dimensions, two or more of the 28 paired comparisons should be significantly different at the  $p < .05$  level.

Tables 2 through 7 show the t-values for tests of significant differences between pairs of Japanese corporations across the six dimensions. The tables indicate that for each dimension of championing, at least seven of the paired comparisons are significantly different at the  $p < .05$  level. Overall, 71 of the 168 comparisons are significantly different. These results clearly rule out the null hypothesis that the norms for championing behavior are the same in all of the Japanese corporations included in this study.

While not the primary focus of this study, the differences in championing behaviors across the firms in the sample deserve closer examination. For example, managers at Hanshin Railroad were significantly less likely than managers at all the other companies in the sample to prefer that champions promote innovation by violating the organizational hierarchy (Table 2). It appears that the preservation of organizational hierarchy is more a part of Hanshin Railroad's corporate culture than it is part of the other companies' corporate cultures. One explanation for this difference might be that Hanshin Railroad is a purely domestic company. Having less contact with foreign suppliers and customers than the other companies, Hanshin Railroad may have been able to preserve more of the traditional Japanese norm of observing organizational hierarchy in its corporate culture than is the case with other Japanese companies.

Managers at Uniden were significantly more likely to prefer champions who violate organizational rules, procedures and norms in championing innovation than were managers at

Kao (Table 3). One explanation for this difference might be a more rule-based, procedure driven culture at Kao than exists at Uniden, a younger, smaller and more entrepreneurial company.

Managers at Uniden are also significantly more likely than managers at all the other companies to treat all organization members as equals in the innovation championing process (Table 4). Perhaps the relative youth or small size of Uniden has encouraged the company to develop a culture of equality that is relatively rare in Japanese organizations.

In addition, managers at Canon were significantly less likely to prefer champions who used formalized methods to persuade others to support innovation efforts than were managers at Kao and Uniden (Table 5).

One explanation for this difference might be that organizations develop cultural norms of persuasion that come from the characteristics of their founding. Uniden is a post-World War II company, developed by a strong entrepreneur, who infused the company with a maverick culture. Canon, by contrast, is an older, larger, and more traditional Japanese company. These results may indicate that older Japanese companies have more traditional approaches to championing because of the culture imprinted in them at their founding.

Managers at Uniden were significantly less likely to prefer champions who used formalized methods to persuade others to support innovation efforts than were managers in five other companies (Table 5), including Canon. This is an interesting finding. While research suggests that membership in the same industry often encourages similar championing behavior among managers in different firms, in the case of these two Japanese electronics firms at least this is not so. Interestingly, there is no significant difference between Uniden and Kao, a

company that while well known for its innovation, is in the consumer packaged goods industry.

Finally, the results concerning the preference for monitoring as a means of championing the innovation process should be noted (Table 6). Both Kao and Uniden differ strongly and significantly from almost all the other firms in the study on this managerial behavior. Why these two companies should have such an aversion to the use of monitoring as a means of encouraging innovation is a provocative question. Combined with the results concerning the use of formalized methods discussed in the previous paragraph, as well as the results concerning cross-functional support for innovation (Table 7), the results may indicate that the corporate culture in both these companies supports more autonomous behavior among their managers than does that of the other firms in the sample. The reasons for this apparent similarity in corporate culture between the two firms can only be speculative, and require a much more detailed examination of the two firms themselves as well as other firms within their respective industries.

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(INSERT TABLES 2-7 ABOUT HERE)

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## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While much of the prior research on Japanese firms has largely assumed near-homogeneity in the cultures and management processes of Japanese firms, the present research indicates that

the process of championing innovation varies significantly across Japanese organizations. The results reported above, based on the responses of a large sample of respondents from eight Japanese firms, provide concrete evidence that there is no consistency between firms in the type of championing behaviors that are sanctioned in Japanese firms.

These results have several important implications. First, the finding that the corporate culture of individual Japanese firms differs in significant ways from each other confirms prior anecdotal evidence and helps to fill the gap in empirical research on Japanese corporate culture and innovation. This finding is particularly significant given the often stated assumption (e.g., Lincoln et al., 1986) that the greater level of social homogeneity in Japanese society can be expected to result in greater corporate culture homogeneity. While Japanese companies may be more homogeneous than American companies, for example, the results from this study indicate that they are certainly not the same. For organizational culture theorists, this result is highly significant as it indicates that variations in corporate culture may in fact be much less influenced by social environment than previously assumed. Work, such as that of Hofstede (1980), which has emphasized the effect of national social environment on work organizations over the effect of corporate culture should be revisited in light of the results reported in this paper.

An understanding of the championing behavior of Japanese managers comes from an understanding of the unique history, structure and culture of the organization to which the managers belong. Therefore, scholars seeking to understand the new product and new technology development process in Japanese firms must accept the existence of differences between Japanese companies. Moreover, an understanding of what drives the innovation

process of a particular Japanese subsidiary or competitor will come from studying the internal processes of that organization, not from popular books about “the Japanese Company” or “Japan, Inc.”

A further implication of this study is that more research which examines intra-national variation between firms is needed to explore both the similarities and differences among Japanese and non-Japanese firms. Almost all quantitative empirical research on Japanese firms has been comparative in nature and has focused on the differences between Japanese and non-Japanese firms. The results reported in this paper suggest that scholars should focus less on the 'Japaneseness' of a particular firm or group of managers and should avoid viewing the Japanese as a group of individuals who all behave the same way and who are motivated by the same factors. Rather, future research needs to focus more on universal factors such as the history, structure and strategy of a particular firm since these factors shape the unique behaviors of managers in that firm. This approach means that regardless of the issue managers are seeking to understand, they should be extremely cautious about assuming a clear similarity in behavior across Japanese firms, particularly when comparing their behavior with foreign counterparts.

Finally, the results of this study have important implications for understanding the development of innovation-based competitive advantages in Japanese firms. As was argued previously, the development of innovation-based competitive advantages are crucial to many Japanese firms. To the degree that innovative behavior can be encouraged and established organizational routines broken in Japanese organizations, Japanese firms will be able to continue to compete on the basis of innovation on world markets. This study found a wide

disparity in the championing behavior norms favored by managers in different Japanese firms. This finding suggests that different Japanese firms will foster different norms regarding innovation.

This may have important consequences for firm success in global markets. While some Japanese firms will, for whatever reason, develop a set of championing norms that may be appropriate for its competitive mission, others will not. As a result, only some Japanese firms will be winners in global competition, making an understanding of the extent to which particular Japanese firms are hampered or helped by their lack of innovative ability even more crucial.

In addition, as this study showed, an understanding of the championing behavior of Japanese managers comes from an understanding of the unique history, structure and culture of the organization to which the managers belong. An understanding of what drives the innovation process of a particular Japanese subsidiary or competitor will come from studying the internal processes of that organization, not from popular books about "the Japanese Company."

Future research should concentrate on a number of areas suggested by the results and limitations of this study. For example, does industry matter with regard to differences in corporate culture and the resultant championing behaviors? Are there greater similarities on these dimensions between Japanese firms in certain industries than in others? Does the age or manner of founding of a firm have an influence? While the firms in this study were drawn from a number of industries, the sample is not large enough to test for the influence of these effects on championing behavior. Future research should certainly address these questions.

In addition, firm performance was not measured in the present study. The preference for certain sets of championing behaviors by firms should have important consequences for Japanese firm performance, just as it does for American firms (Denison, 1990). Future research should look at whether there are important relationships between corporate culture, as expressed in championing behavior, and firm performance, and whether the same relationships hold up for non-Japanese firms as well. Such research would add immeasurably to our understanding of the effect of corporate culture and innovation on firm performance.

In conclusion, the results of this study contribute significantly to our ability to break the stereotype of the existence of a "Japanese firm", and to our understanding of innovative behavior within Japanese organizations. Hopefully, scholars and managers will take note of these findings and look carefully at Japanese competitors to develop a more accurate understanding of how innovation occurs in them, rather than simply relying on time-worn and often inaccurate stereotypes.

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**Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for the factor scores on the championing dimensions**

	N	HIER	RULE	EQUA	FORM	MON	CROSS
Kao	36	-0.31 (0.81)	0.20 (0.83)	-0.31 (1.00)	-0.24 (0.69)	-0.73 (0.85)	0.07 (0.88)
Uniden	38	-0.11 (0.93)	-0.49 (1.11)	0.33 (1.06)	-0.51 (1.06)	-0.14 (0.83)	0.10 (0.78)
Canon	142	-0.30 (0.90)	-0.16 (1.11)	-0.41 (1.02)	0.09 (0.83)	0.74 (0.57)	-0.69 (0.96)
Mitsui PetroChemicals	244	-0.11 (0.94)	-0.23 (0.93)	-0.35 (0.98)	0.04 (0.88)	0.74 (0.59)	-0.58 (0.86)
Hanshin Railroad	63	-0.70 (0.90)	-0.07 (1.13)	-0.11 (0.93)	-0.06 (0.96)	0.54 (0.61)	-0.26 (0.89)
Kanto Auto	26	-0.19 (1.06)	-0.03 (0.98)	-0.54 (1.32)	0.08 (0.94)	0.88 (0.50)	-0.48 (0.80)
Mitsui Toatsu	63	0.07 (0.85)	-0.55 (1.05)	-0.37 (1.05)	-0.20 (1.01)	0.79 (0.67)	-0.56 (0.77)
Kawasaki Steel	62	-0.36 (0.91)	0.01 (0.99)	-0.33 (0.90)	0.24 (0.89)	0.48 (0.71)	-0.46 (0.80)
Chronbach's Alpha		0.69	0.73	0.69	0.59	0.83	0.53

Key: Factor score  
(Standard Deviation)

HIER=Preference for violating organizational hierarchy in the innovation championing process.

RULE=Preference for violating organizational norms rules and procedures in the innovation championing process.

EQUA=Preference for treating all organization members as equals in the innovation championing process.

FORM=Preference for using formalized mechanisms to persuade others to support the innovation effort.

MON=Preference for close monitoring of innovators.

CROSS=Preference for seeking cross-functional support for the innovation.

**Table 2. T-values for tests of significant differences between pairs of Japanese organizations on the preference for violating organizational hierarchy in championing innovation**

	Kao (Kao)	Uniden (Un)	Canon (Ca)	Mitsui Petro Chem- icals (Mpc)	Mitsui road (Hr)	Hanshin Rail- (Kan)	Kanto Auto (Mt)	Mitsui Toatsu (Ks)	Kawasaki Steel
Kao	-----	-1.02	-0.07	-1.25	<b>2.14</b>	0.24	<b>-2.20</b>	-0.50	
Un		-----	1.18	0.01	<b>3.17</b>	1.33	-0.98	0.35	
Ca			-----	<b>-1.99</b>	<b>2.94</b>	0.41	<b>-2.78</b>	-0.54	
Mpc				-----	<b>4.50</b>	1.88	-1.36	0.44	
Hr					-----	<b>-2.13</b>	<b>-4.95</b>	<b>-2.30</b>	
Kan						-----	<b>-2.73</b>	-0.73	
Mt							-----	1.24	
Ks								-----	

**Note: Comparisons in bold face are significant at the  $p < .05$  level in a two-tailed test.**

**Table 3. T-values for tests of significant differences between pairs of Japanese organizations on the preference for violating organizational rules, procedures and norms in championing innovation**

	Kao (Kao)	Uniden (Un)	Canon (Ca) Petro- Chem- icals (Mpc)	Mitsui Rail- road (Hr)	Hanshin Auto (Kan)	Kanto Toatsu (Mt)	Mitsui Steel (Ks)	Kawasaki
Kao	-----	<b>-3.02</b>	-0.32	1.86	<b>2.64</b>	1.29	<b>3.69</b>	1.03
Un		-----	-1.61	-1.55	-1.78	<b>-2.30</b>	0.29	-1.68
Ca			-----	0.63	-0.51	-1.02	<b>2.36</b>	-0.55
Mpc				-----	-1.12	1.74	<b>2.38</b>	-1.01
Hr					-----	-0.42	<b>2.44</b>	-0.16
Kan						-----	<b>-3.03</b>	-0.17
Mt							-----	<b>2.15</b>
Ks								-----

**Table 4. T-values for tests of significant differences between pairs of Japanese organizations on the preference for treating all organization members as equals in championing innovation**

Kao (Kao)	Uniden (Un)	Canon (Ca)	Mitsui Petro Chem- icals (Mpc)	Mitsui Rail- road (Hr)	Hanshin Auto (Kan)	Kanto Toatsu (Mt)	Mitsui Steel (Ks)	Kawasaki
Kao	-----	<b>-2.68</b>	0.54	0.23	-1.02	0.14	-0.53	0.77
Un		-----	<b>3.97</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>2.91</b>
Ca			-----	-0.59	<b>-2.03</b>	-0.50	-0.27	0.55
Mpc				-----	-1.77	-0.10	-0.14	0.89
Hr					-----	1.40	1.48	1.71
Kan						-----	0.19	0.83
Mt							-----	-0.64
Ks								-----

**Table 5. T-values for tests of significant differences between pairs of Japanese organizations on the preference for using formalized methods to persuade others to support the innovation**

	Kao (Kao)	Uniden (Un)	Canon (Ca)	Mitsui Petro- Chem- icals (Mpc)	Mitsui Rail- road (Hr)	Hanshin Auto (Kan)	Kanto Toatsu (Mt)	Mitsui Steel (Ks)	Kawasaki
Kao	-----	1.26	<b>-2.20</b>	-1.82	-1.00	<b>-2.82</b>	-0.23	-1.58	
Un		-----	<b>-3.69</b>	<b>-3.44</b>	<b>-2.17</b>	<b>-3.79</b>	-1.46	<b>-2.28</b>	
Ca			-----	0.53	1.11	-1.21	<b>2.13</b>	0.20	
Mpc				-----	0.77	-1.62	1.84	-0.25	
Hr					-----	-1.82	0.79	-0.64	
Kan						-----	<b>-2.59</b>	-0.75	
Mt							-----	-1.22	
Ks								-----	

**Table 6. T-values for tests of significant differences between pairs of Japanese organizations on the preference for monitoring the innovation process**

	Kao (Kao)	Uniden (Un)	Canon (Ca) Chem- icals (Hr) (Mpc)	Mitsui Petro road (Kan)	Hanshin Rail- (Mt)	Kanto Auto (Ks)	Mitsui Toatsu Steel	Kawasaki
Kao	-----	<b>3.01</b>	<b>-12.36</b>	<b>-13.05</b>	<b>-8.63</b>	<b>-7.58</b>	<b>-9.79</b>	<b>-8.61</b>
Un		-----	<b>-7.62</b>	<b>-8.05</b>	<b>-4.77</b>	<b>-4.01</b>	<b>-6.15</b>	<b>-5.60</b>
Ca			-----	0.01	<b>2.22</b>	<b>2.73</b>	-0.49	-1.13
Mpc				-----	<b>2.34</b>	<b>2.92</b>	-0.52	-1.12
Hr					-----	0.50	-2.12	<b>-2.46</b>
Kan						-----	<b>-2.54</b>	<b>-2.56</b>
Mt							-----	-0.62
Ks								-----

**Table 7. T-values for tests of significant differences between pairs of Japanese organizations on the preference for appealing for cross-functional support for the innovation**

	Kao (Kao)	Uniden (Un)	Canon (Ca) Chem- icals (Mpc)	Mitsui Petro road (Hr)	Mitsui Rail- Kan (Kan)	Hanshin Auto (Mt)	Kanto Toatsu (Ks)	Mitsui Steel	Kawasaki
Kao	-----	-0.17	<b>4.30</b>	<b>4.19</b>	1.75	<b>3.03</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>2.49</b>	
Un		-----	<b>4.68</b>	<b>4.57</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>2.86</b>	
Ca			-----	-1.19	<b>-3.05</b>	-1.66	0.95	-1.07	
Mpc			-----	<b>-2.62</b>	-0.98	-0.15	-0.57		
Hr				-----		1.34	<b>2.05</b>	1.09	
Kan					-----		-0.72	0.09	
Mt						-----	-0.46		
Ks							-----		